WIZARD™
PRESENTS
THE MASK™
1/2
JUNE
FREE
The Mask & © 1995 Dark Horse

WIZARD™
PRESENTS

THE MAXX™

FEATURES PAGE

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A talk with Maxx creator Sam Kieth

The Maxx 7
The exclusive "1/2" story

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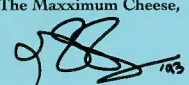
A look into Sam's pad

While it goes against all conventional mathematical wisdom that one-half is equal in any way to a whole, there's no question that there's a whole lot of entertainment in this special issue of *Maxx #1/2*. One of the beauties of the book is the ability of Sam Kieth and Bill Loebs to bring The Maxx to life, both in words and pictures. That, I must say, is something they have accomplished to perfection in this issue. So why are you wasting time reading this letter? Instead, read this quasi-origin of The Maxx. When you're done, make room in your collection for this issue, between *Maxx* #1 and the forthcoming *Maxx* #0.

Enjoy!

The Maxximum Cheese,



Gareb S. Shamus

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MAXX-IMUM EXPOSURE

Sam Kieth discusses the current and future status of his latest creation

Sam Kieth is taking his career to The Maxx. The busy artist, who has worked on such characters as Sandman, Wolverine, and The Hulk, has drawn rave reviews for the debut of his latest title. Before The Maxx debuted in Darker Image, Kieth took a few moments to talk about the strange details of his new series with Wizard writer Andrew S. Harris.

WIZARD: Tell us about this dream world that The Maxx lives in.

KIETH: The Other World will be like the Australian outback, but it will be like the Australian outback on acid or some other really weird drug. He has these hallucinations of these strange creatures, called Izzes, that look like lemmings would look like if they ate things—they've got these big, nasty-looking teeth. They're just these little guys, though, but when they're all together they're pretty strong, and in this hallucination world in the dreamtime they're just starting to come out. They're sprouting from the ground with these hands that are trying to pull him down, and then eventually we get to see them.

WIZARD: What about the real world? How does he see it?

KIETH: Well, sometimes he sees things normally and sometimes he sees things differently from everyone else. It all has to do with this spiritual connection to the dream world. In the hallucination, the social worker is like a leopard queen—like a prehistoric woman wearing skintight outfits. He's wearing clothes, and she's naked as a jaybird. But in this dream world he's like her spirit animal, which is something that the Indians used to believe in. They believed that a spirit animal is sent to help a person out in their life—a coyote, a wolf, or a bear—and whenever you saw that type of animal (in real life) it would be significant. What animal The Maxx is is a mystery that we find out later on, but he thinks he's her spirit animal. He's afraid because he has these crazy dreams—he knows he's a normal guy under the mask, but he keeps thinking he's going to take off the mask and have the head of this animal.

WIZARD: So that's a mask, and not his real face that we've seen in the previews.

KIETH: Actually, it's not a real mask, either. Maxx's

mask in the real world is alive, like a little creature sitting on his face, that's connected to the spirit world. Anytime that someone tries to take off the mask, it bites their fingers off. People think that it's Maxx biting the fingers off, but it's really the mask, and that's one of the reasons people think he's crazy.

WIZARD: What is that spike thing coming out of his hand? Is that a bone?

KIETH: That's his middle finger. It's a claw, so when he makes a fist he has to give you 'the finger' because he can't bend it. Good taste is long behind. Good taste is history (laughter). I'd like for him not to have it, but that's the way he is. He just happens to have a middle finger that's a claw. Hey, it could happen.

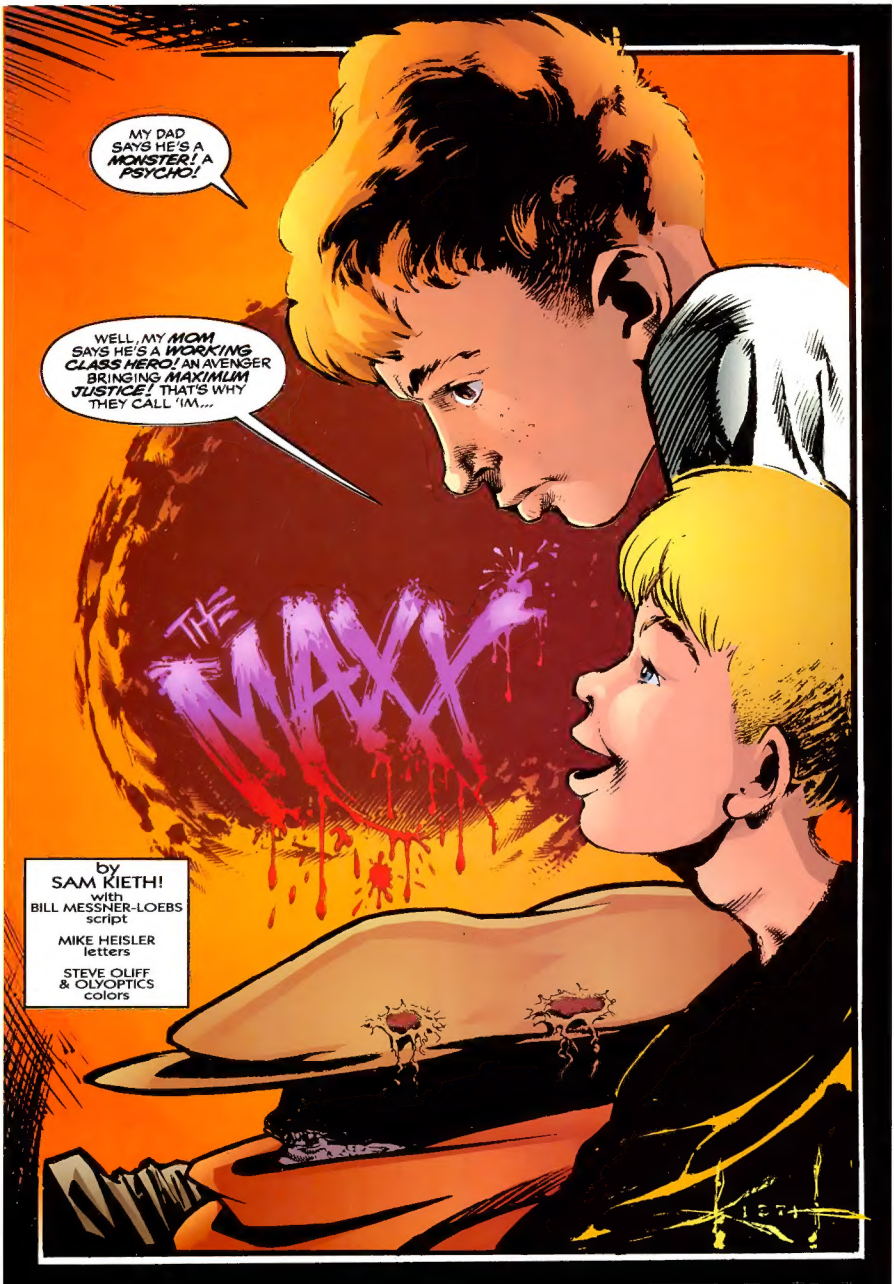
WIZARD: Is this book going to cross over with other Image titles?

KIETH: There's talk of involving the Youngblood characters, with them arriving and trying to find out if he should join their group. In his hallucination, he sees them as a tribe, with each one of them having a different animal head. One of the issues will also involve a character from Savage Dragon.

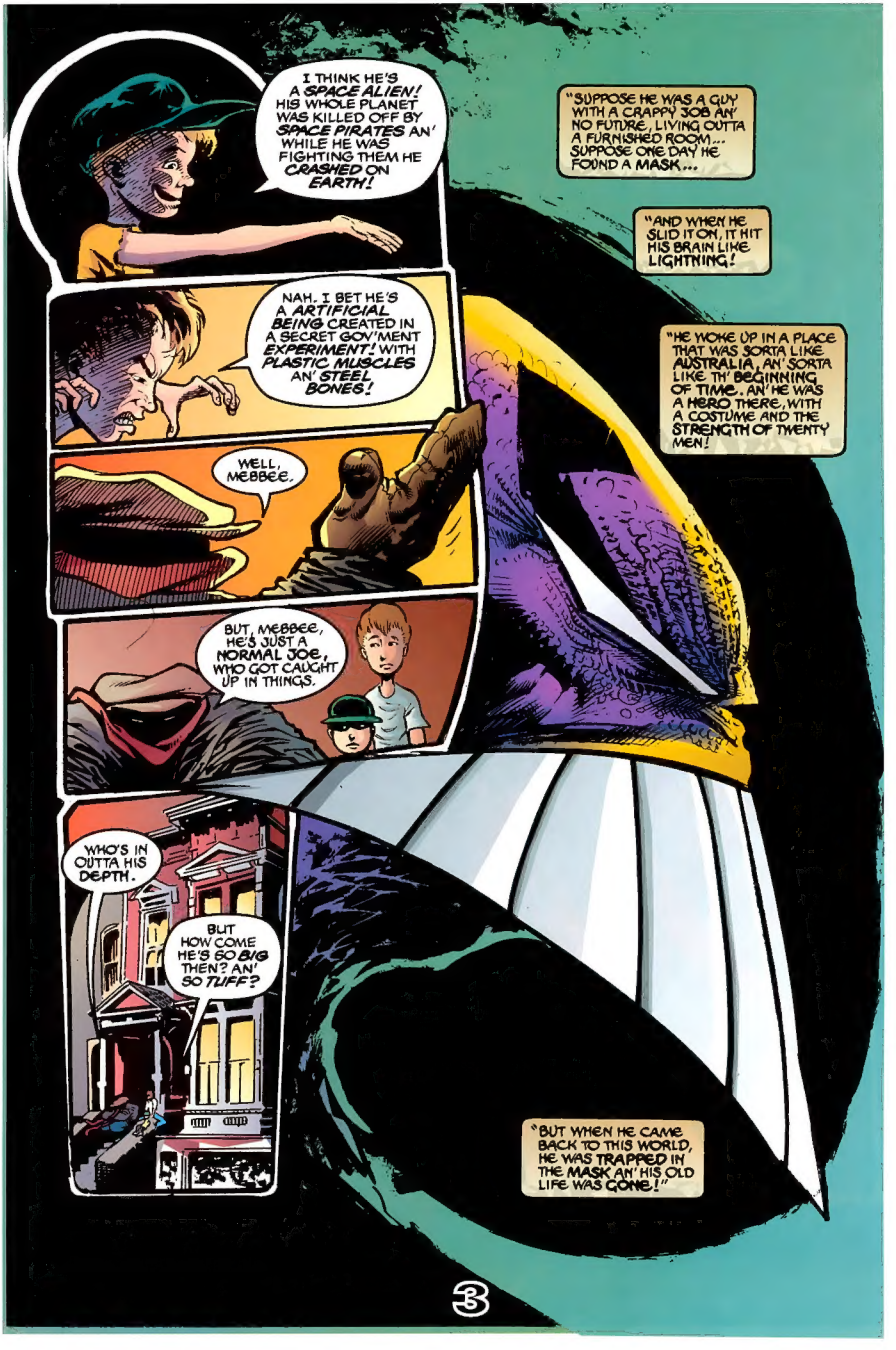
WIZARD: What other plans do you have for The Maxx?

KIETH: Well, there's an Image card series coming out that gives plenty of hints about his origins, and then there's this talent agency that handles characters, that kind of stuff, for Image. It might be making a Savage Dragon cartoon, and they're possibly talking about The Maxx, too. Rob Liefeld has got this Hollywood thing going, so we'll see what happens. ☆

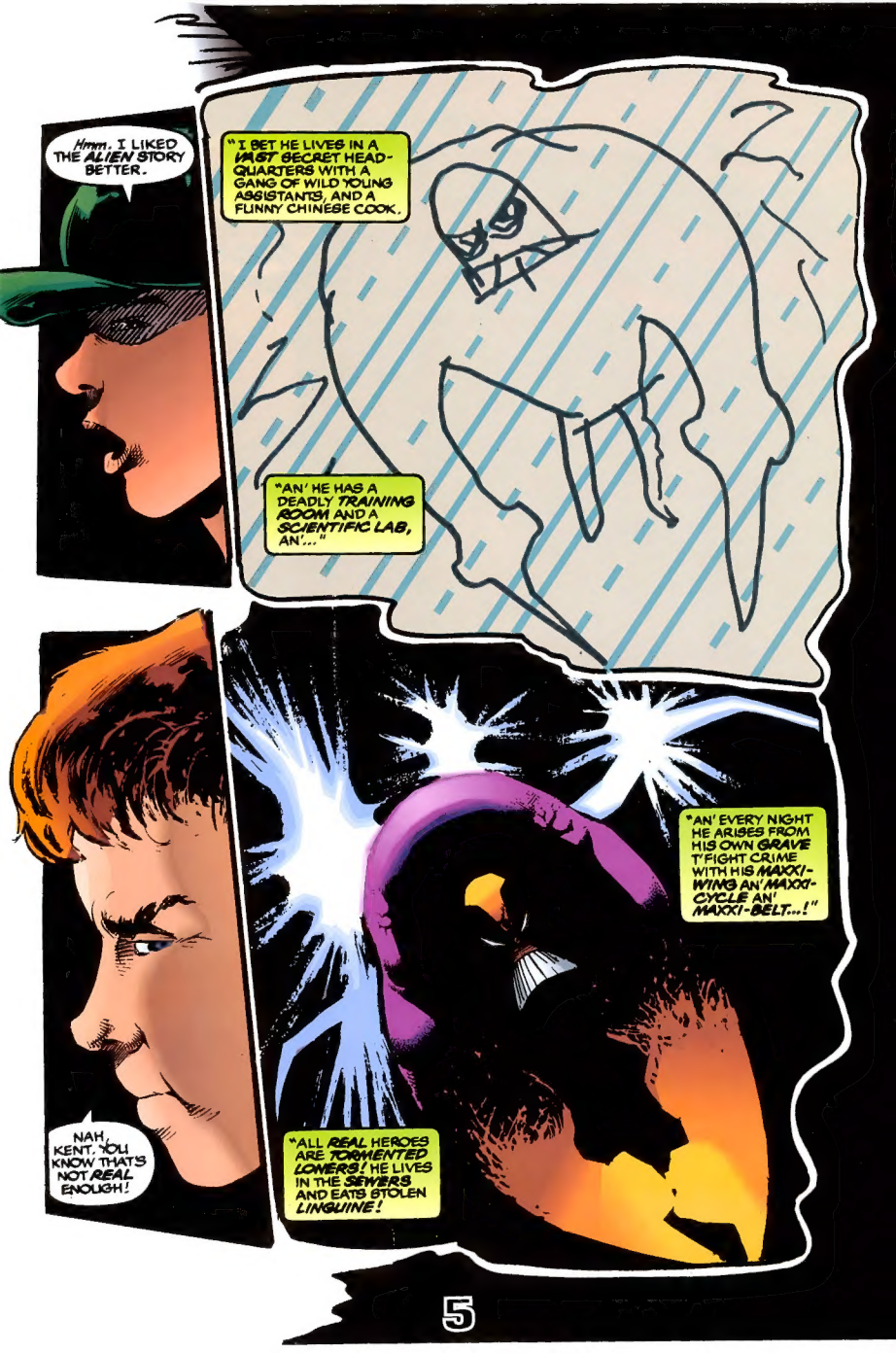
HEY, DON'T I KNOW THAT GUY?
...T'S HE DOING WITH TWO PHONES?!
...ONE ELSE NOTICE HE'S ONLY A FOOT AND A HALF HIGH?
HE'S ONE OF THOSE UNDER-GROUND THINGS, FROM MY DREAM.
ONLY BLACK.
AND FASTER.


MY DAD SAYS HE'S A MONSTER! A PSYCHO!
WELL, MY MOM SAYS HE'S A WORKING CLASS HERO! AN AVENGER BRINGING MAXIMUM JUSTICE! THAT'S WHY THEY CALL 'IM...
THE MAXX
by SAM KIETH!
with BILL MESSNER-LOEBS script
MIKE HEISLER letters
STEVE OLIFF & OLYOPTICS colors

I MEAN, HE *THREW* IT INTO A *DELI* WINDOW.
AND THAT *RUPTURED* A WATER MAIN! THEY'RE *STILL* PUMPING OUT THREE BLOCKS OF HOUSES.
HE WAS THROWING IT AT A *MUGGER!* MY MOM SAYS Y'GOTTA *BREAK* SOME EGGS. INNIT THAT *RIGHT*, MISTER?
YEAH, BUT, KENT... WHAT ABOUT THAT *BUS* HE WRECKED ON TUESDAY?
YEH.


I THINK HE'S A SPACE ALIEN! HIS WHOLE PLANET WAS KILLED OFF BY SPACE PIRATES AN' WHILE HE WAS FIGHTING THEM HE CRASHED ON EARTH!
NAH. I BET HE'S A ARTIFICIAL BEING CREATED IN A SECRET GOV'MENT EXPERIMENT! WITH PLASTIC MUSCLES AN' STEEL BONES!
WELL, MEBBEE,
BUT, MEBBEE, HE'S JUST A NORMAL JOE, WHO GOT CAUGHT UP IN THINGS.
WHO'S IN OUTTA HIS DEPTH.
BUT HOW COME HE'S SO BIG THEN? AN' SO TUFF?
"SUPPOSE HE WAS A GUY WITH A CRAPPY JOB AN' NO FUTURE, LIVING OUTTA A FURNISHED ROOM... SUPPOSE ONE DAY HE FOUND A MASK...
"AND WHEN HE SLID IT ON, IT HIT HIS BRAIN LIKE LIGHTNING!
"HE WOKE UP IN A PLACE THAT WAS SORTA LIKE AUSTRALIA, AN' SORTA LIKE TH' BEGINNING OF TIME. AN' HE WAS A HERO THERE, WITH A COSTUME AND THE STRENGTH OF TWENTY MEN!
"BUT WHEN HE CAME BACK TO THIS WORLD, HE WAS TRAPPED IN THE MASK AN' HIS OLD LIFE WAS GONE!"

"HE THRUST HIS HANDS INTO BOILING LAVA...
"AND WHEN THEY CAME OUT THEY WERE CHANGED...!
"MADE INVULNERABLE, STAINED AND TEMPERED BY THE SULPHUROUS ROCK...!"
WELL... I GUESS THAT... COULD'VE HAPPENED.
BUT HOW DID HE GET HIS CLAWS THEN, IF HE WASN'T A GOV'MENT EXPERIMENT?
HE GOT THEM IN THAT SAVAGE DREAMLAND.


Hmm. I LIKED THE ALIEN STORY BETTER.
"I BET HE LIVES IN A VAST SECRET HEAD-QUARTERS WITH A GANG OF WILD YOUNG ASSISTANTS, AND A FUNNY CHINESE COOK.
"AN' HE HAS A DEADLY TRAINING ROOM AND A SCIENTIFIC LAB, AN'..."
"AN' EVERY NIGHT HE ARISES FROM HIS OWN GRAVE T'FIGHT CRIME WITH HIS MAXXI-WING AN' MAXXI-CYCLE AN' MAXXI-BELT...!"
"ALL REAL HEROES ARE TORMENTED LOSERS! HE LIVES IN THE SEWERS AND EATS STOLEN LINGUINE!
NAH, KENT. YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT REAL ENOUGH!

SOUNDS GOOD. BUT I THINK HE'S JUST ANOTHER HOMELESS BUM, LIVIN' IN DUMPSTERS AN' DRIFTIN' FROM SHELTER T' SHELTER...
"HE CAN'T HOLD DOWN A JOB AN' HE'S GOT NO REAL FRIENDS. HE CAN'T EVEN TELL SOMETIMES HOW MUCH OF THE LIFE HE LIVES IS REAL AN' HOW MUCH IS THE DREAMLAND...
"HE TRIES TO DO GOOD, BUT MOSTLY HE BREAKS THINGS AND SCREWS UP...
PIZZA
FIRESTONE

NAH. THAT'S TOO MUCH DOOMER, MISTER! I THINK HE'S GOT A ORB OF FEAR, AN' HE LIVES IN A FORTRESS OF SHADOWS...
OH, GEEZ! LOOKIT, KENT! IT'S JERRY THE CRACK HEAD!
RATS. THAT STOOP IS ALWAYS HASSLING US!
HIY'AR, KEEDS. :KOFF: :HOFF: GOT ENNY THIN F'R OLE JERR?
Um... NO. WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY TODAY, JERRY. HONEST.
THAT'S RIGHT. WE'RE BROKE. WE...

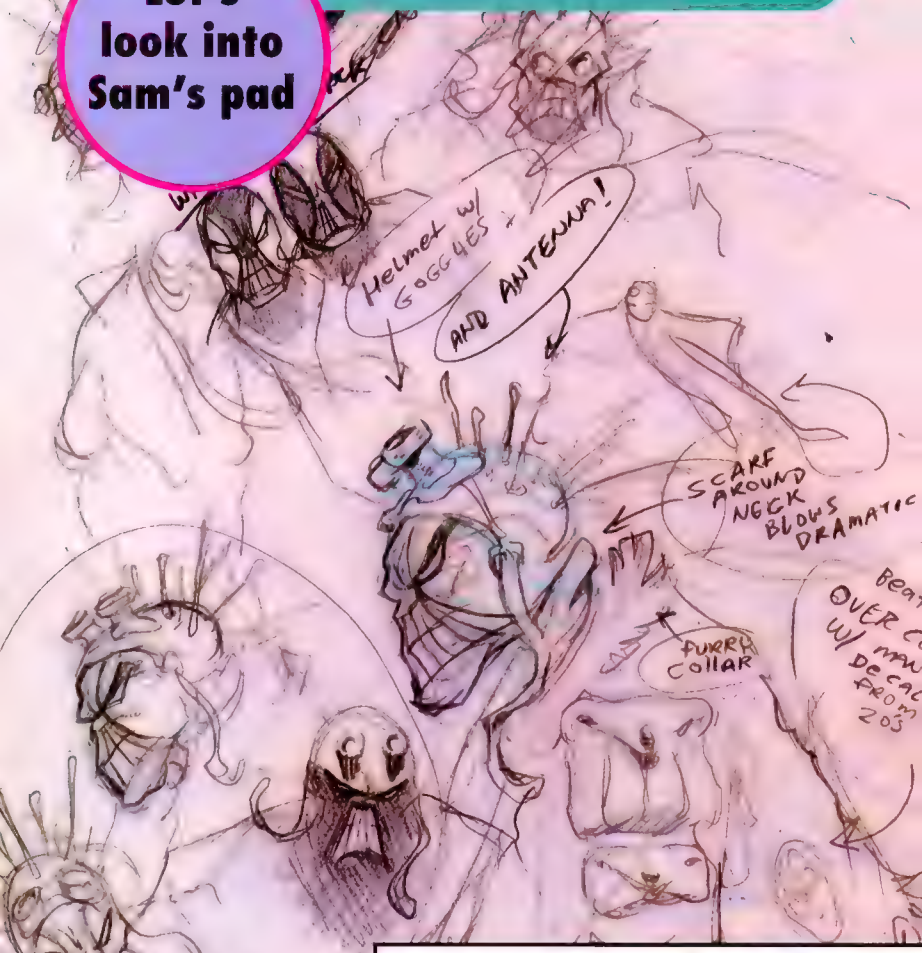
NO! WE'RE NOT GONNA GIVE IN TO YOU ANY-MORE! THE MAXX WOULDN'T!
MAYBE I GOTTA KNIFE IN MY POCKET... MAYBE I KNOW WHERE Y'SLEEP AT NIGHT...
TWO...
YEH... :HAFFK:... RIGHT. LISSEN, PUNK, SMART-MOUTH KIDS D'SAPPEAR IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD...
WHAT CHOO GONNA DO, KEED? :KAAKF: TALK ME T'DEATH?
I'M COUNTIN' TO THREE, THEN I MUSS YOU UP!
ONE...

I C'N KILL YOU... I C'N KILL Y'R FOLKS... I C'N... I... I...
THREE!
YAAAAAA!
WE DID IT!
WE SCARED HIM OFF! WOO!

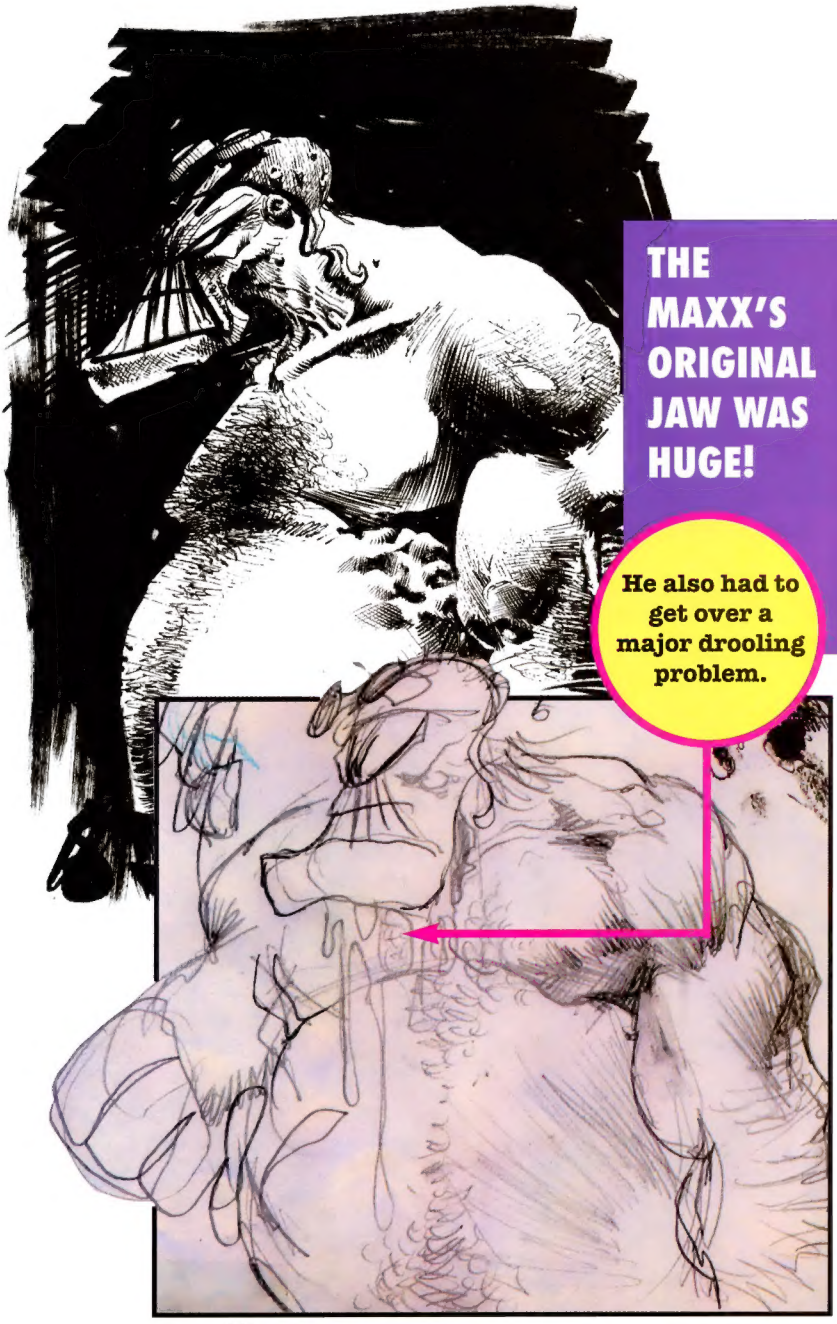
HARRY! KENT! SUPPER!
GET IN HERE AND WASH YOUR HANDS, YOU TWO... AND STOP HANGING AROUND THAT OLD BUM!
"AW, WE WAS JUST TALKING, MOM. WHAT'S COOKING?"
"SLOPPY JOES AND PEANUT BUTTER SHAKES. DO YOU LIKE THAT, HARRY?"
"YES'M."
"GOOD. AND THEN I WANT YOU TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK."
"AW, MOM, D'WE HAVE TO?"
"YES. YOU DON'T WANT TO END UP OLD AND ALONE ON A CURB SOMEWHERE, DO YOU?"

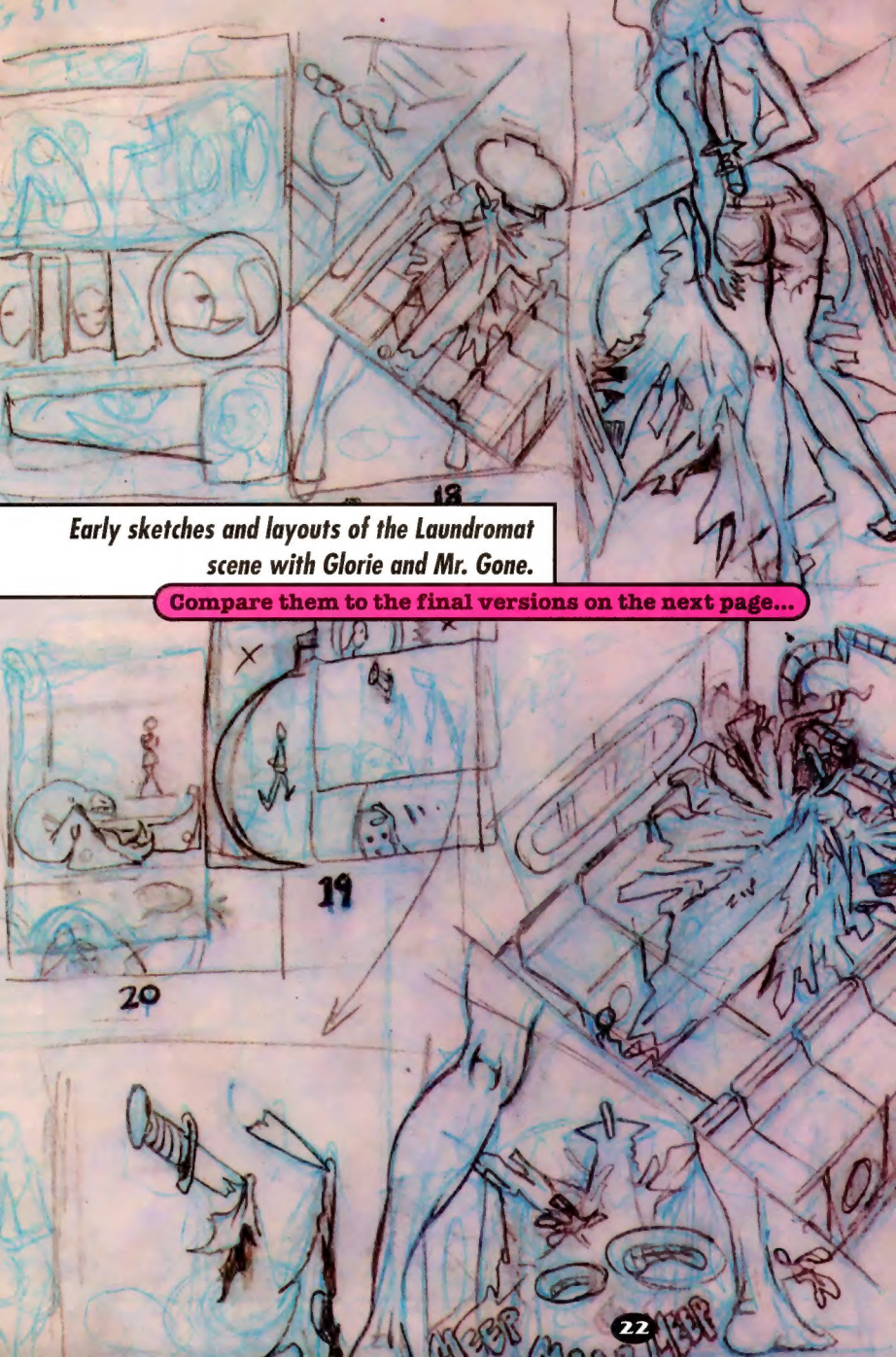
ARTIST'S sketchbook

Let's look into Sam's pad



Early sketches of The Maxx show a traditional cloth mask. He also donned a '30s style helmet with straps and goggles.

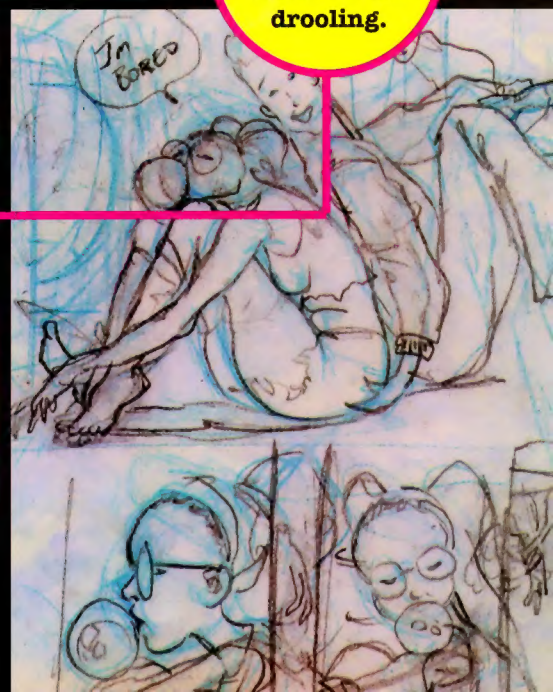

THE MAXX'S ORIGINAL JAW WAS HUGE!
He also had to get over a major drooling problem.



Early sketches and layouts of the Laundromat scene with Glorie and Mr. Gone.

Compare them to the final versions on the next page...

Maxx later loses the cap and goggles, but he's still drooling.



THE MASK
image
4
JUN
$1.95
$2.45
Canada
GOLLY!
HERE I SIT
ALL BROKEN
HEARTED TRIED